

“Tomorrow”

“Mom, will you read a book to me?”

Jessica sighed. “I have to get these dishes done before bed. Maybe tomorrow?”

Jenny tried to hide her disappointment.

“Please Mom? Please? I promise it won’t take long.”

Jessica shook her head.

“I really wish I could,” she said, “but I have to work late tomorrow, and if I don’t get these dishes done tonight, they won’t get done.”

Jessica worked late the next two nights and had too many tasks to catch up with over the weekend.

“Mom, will you play dress-up with me?”

Jessica peered over the mound of clean laundry she was folding.

“Sorry, honey, I’ve gotta get this laundry done and then start another load.”

Jenny nodded. “Okay, Mom, maybe later?”

Jessica, half-listening, nodded and kept folding clothes.

But Jessica didn’t finish with the laundry until Jenny was sound asleep on her bed, still wearing her pink tutu and sparkly blue fairy wings.

“Maybe tomorrow, baby girl,” Jessica whispered as she covered Jenny with her favorite pink blanket.

“Mom, can we have a tea party today?”

Jessica shook her head.

“I’m sorry, Jenny,” she said, exhausted. “I have to finish a report for work for my presentation tomorrow, and then I have to figure out what we’re having for dinner the rest of the week so I can shop for the items I need tomorrow at the grocery store.”

Jenny wrapped her arms around Jessica.

“I know you’re working so hard, Mommy,” she said, “and I love you!”

Jessica gave Jenny a tired smile.

“Love you, too, honey. Maybe tomorrow?”

“Wanna play Barbies with me, Mom?”

Jenny had just opened her birthday gift – a brand-new Barbie house and four new Barbies, complete with colorful outfits and accessories.

Jessica shook her head.

“No, I’m sorry, honey, but I can’t,” Jessica responded. “I need to stop by your grandma’s house to help her with a few things.

Jenny’s grandmother had fallen two weeks before and wasn’t getting around so easily.

“I understand, Mom,” she said. “Grandma needs help right now. Maybe tomorrow?”

“Hey mom, you want to watch a movie together?”

Jessica nodded.

“Yeah, I think I have some time that I could do that now,” she said.

Jessica slid under the blanket and wrapped her arms around Jenny. This was the perfect time to spend with her daughter. They could catch up on conversations about school, her upcoming birthday, and other things.

But within only a few minutes, Jessica had fallen asleep. She’d been working late all week and the long hours were finally catching up with her.

Jenny wished she could spend time with her mom.

“Maybe tomorrow,” she thought.

It was hard to believe Jenny was now a freshman in high school.

“Jenny, do you want to hang out after school? I should get done at work early today.”

Jenny thought for a moment before shaking her head.

“Sorry, Mom, but I can’t,” she said. “My friends and I are going to the game after school.”

Jessica nodded.

“Okay,” she said, “maybe tomorrow.”

“Mom, I really need some new jeans.”

Jessica stared at her daughter. She couldn’t believe how much her daughter had grown and matured into such a lovely sixteen-year-old young lady.

“Jenny, why don’t we go to the mall together Saturday? We could stop by your favorite Chinese restaurant and then maybe catch a movie afterward?”

But Jenny already had plans with her best friend.

“I can’t go on Saturday, Mom,” she replied. “Macey and I have plans to hang out.”

Jessica nodded slowly. She was beginning to see after all of these years how she’d missed so many chances to spend time with Jenny.

“I understand, honey,” she said as she slipped out of the room before Jenny saw the tears in her eyes. “Maybe tomorrow.”

“I can’t believe I’m graduating from college, Mom,” said Jenny. “Can you believe it?”

Jessica really couldn’t believe that her spunky little brown-haired daughter was graduating from college. Where had the time gone?

Later that afternoon when Jenny walked across the stage to receive her college diploma, Jessica clapped the loudest of anyone in the auditorium. She was so proud of her daughter for graduating with honors. She'd worked so hard to earn her degree.

Jenny's family and friends celebrated together late that evening with gifts and a special meal at her favorite restaurant.

At the restaurant, Jenny introduced her special friend to Jessica.

"Mom, I want you to meet Ryan," she said. We met in the library on campus."

Jenny turned to Ryan.

"This is my mom, Jessica, my best friend," she told Ryan as she took her mother's arm. "I'm glad you two are finally meeting for the first time."

"Mom, guess what? Ryan just proposed!"

As Jessica heard those words, she felt a bit of a sting. She was happy for Jenny, but Jessica knew it would be difficult to lose her daughter. Things would never be the same.

"Oh, Jenny, I'm so happy for you!" she replied and tried to sound enthusiastic over the phone. "I can't wait to shop for your wedding dress with you! It's going to be so fun!"

This great news meant Jenny had something to focus on and wouldn't realize Jessica needed her daughter more than ever.

"Maybe tomorrow," Jessica thought. "Maybe I'll tell her tomorrow."

"Mom!" Jenny yelled as she entered the house. "Where are you?"

Jessica was lying on the couch, covered with a blanket and trying to escape the nauseous feeling that kept washing over her like a continuous tidal wave.

"Mom, are you okay?"

Jenny knelt beside the couch and touched her mother's cheek.

Jessica opened her eyes and smiled softly.

“Yeah, honey, just feeling a little under the weather today.”

Jenny had no idea that her mother had been diagnosed with Stage 4 breast cancer six months earlier.

“Are you sure mom? Can I make you some soup or get you some medicine?”

Jessica looked at her daughter and thought about what she wanted to say.

“No, Jenny, just sit here with me for a few minutes.”

Jenny stayed all afternoon with her mom. She told her about her most recent plans for the wedding, funny stories about Ryan, about her job, and much more.

Jenny’s words were comfort to Jessica. She snuggled under the blanket and let her daughter’s sweet voice carry her off to sleep. Finally, her body rested peacefully. Hopefully she’d feel better tomorrow...

“Oh, Mom, I can’t believe I didn’t know you had cancer.”

It was just three months after Jenny sat beside her mom on the couch and updated her about her life. She knew her mother was sick that day, but she didn’t know how sick. Jessica had decided she wanted to keep the news to herself. She didn’t want to ruin Jenny’s wedding or her happiness.

Now, tears flowed freely down Jenny’s face. She touched her hand to the cold glass of the picture frame. The photograph was of Jessica and Jenny on her ninth birthday when she unwrapped her new Barbie house. Jenny stood proudly beside it and smiled at the camera, while Jessica kneeled beside her daughter. But she wasn’t looking at the camera. Jessica’s smile was huge as she smiled and looked at her daughter.

Today was supposed to be the happiest day of her life, but Jenny knew she was missing her best friend. Her mother had passed away peacefully in her sleep just one month before Jenny’s wedding day.

Later that afternoon as she stood with Ryan in their church, they clasped hands and said their vows to each other. Then they each took a delicate red rose and walked over and placed it on the chair where Jessica would have been sitting.

Jenny leaned down, tears sliding down her cheeks.

“I love you, Mom,” she whispered. “You’ll always be my very best friend.”